

**UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS LOWELL
CENTER FOR LOWELL HISTORY
ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION**

**LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
AMERICAN FOLKLIFE PROJECT
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT**

**INFORMANT: JOHN MASSEY
CONDUCTED BY: MICHAEL BELL**

**B = MICHAEL BELL
M = JOHN MASSEY
D = DOUG DENATALE**

LFP MB-A001

[Someone clears throat]

B: Mm, good response.

M: Was it good? How about now? No?

D: It's moving a little bit.

M: [Joking in German: Spreknze English? Nein. Sprekn ze Bow Wow. Yeah. Woof, Woof.]
Go ahead, what do you want to ask me?

B: Ah, let's, let's just talk about the (--)

M: The holy water?

B: Yeah, what happened here this morning.

M: Holy moly!

B: What happened here this morning?

M: What do you mean?

B: With the food.

M: You mean lunch today that you offered us?

B: Yeah.

M: You mean the (--)

B: No, I noticed the last time I came there was more chanting. You know? Was that, that was a special thing for the Laotian Monks?

M: No. The last time he came there was, somebody wanted to have like a little um, memorial for their ancestors that passed away already.

D: Okay. (M: so we chanted a little more) I had no idea.

M: All we did today were chants, was the normal ah, blessing, to not thank, not thank the people, but to recite why it's good for them to feed us, you know.

B: That was after the meal?

M: Yeah.

B: Before the, there was something before the meal, right?

M: No. Not today, no.

B: No I meant the last time I was here.

M: Yeah. Usually before, there's nothing before the meal. Sometimes we chant before the meal, but usually with the, Sao Khon always chants after the meal. And they chant back to us.

D: I noticed, yes.

M: Thank you for letting us make this good Karma together.

B: So what, you can translate the chants?

M: Yeah, most of them. Most of them I have in English.

B: So what does it translate into?

[Someone asks a question in the background.] The one we chanted today Mike?

M: Yeah.

D: I mean do you chant the same one every day?

M: Every time we get offered something. Anything. Like when you came with the food today,

I should have done that, but I did it after lunch today. Now let's see, we're on page (--)

B: So whenever you're offered something.

M: Yeah, we have to chant this, "Just as the rivers full of water fill the ocean full, even so thus, even so does that here given benefit the dead. Whatever by you wished or wanted, may it quickly be. May all your wishes be fulfilled as the moon upon the fifteenth day, or as the wish fulfilling gem. Ah, may all this stress be averted. May all disease be destroyed. And may no dangers come to you. May you be happy living long, and be of respectful nature and honor your elders. Four qualities will increase in you, long life, beauty, happiness and strength." That's what we chant after every meal. The first part is chanted by the [Abbott?]. [Massey is chanting] He holds it right there and then everybody, whatever other Monks are here go, [chants in Bali] That means may all this stress be averted. [Continues to chant in Bali] That's it.

B: What language is that in?

M: Bali. This is the original Buddhist religious language. It's, some people call it street Sanskrit.

B: But it's still understood by even the people who come to the Temple.

M: Yeah, a lot of people understand some of the words, but not all the words, because it's not really a speaking language. It's more of like a mem, language.

B: Right. It would be like Latin is to (--)

M: It's like Latin. It's like a language from memorization and for scholar, scholar leaders. It's not a very popular language any more. Not many people study it. Only Monks basically. And a few college and scholars, language scholars. It's the root of the Cambodian, Thai and Laos language though.

B: Oh it is.

D: Bali? Yeah, like [Tomma?] Buddhist teaching [Tomma?] [Tomma [unclear]].

B: The Sanskrit is the root of all Indo-European languages too.

M: This is like the street version of the Sanskrit. Mike, want some coffee, buddy?

B: Sure. So would you be able to understand a Buddhist ceremony you know, chanted?

M: Yeah.

B: In any other sect, or other part of the world, do they use the same?

M: Yeah, basically they use the same formulas. (B: Okay) All Buddhism is based on four

things. The Four Noble Truths, they call it. The Buddha [unclear]. The first noble truth is suffering. Okay. The second one is ah, the rising of suffering. The third one is the cessation of suffering. The fourth one is a path, or a way to end suffering. All Buddhism is based on that, every country. If it's not based on that it's not Buddhism. Simple. You know. The teaching evolves all from those four things. That's why they call it The Four Noble Truths, because most people never recognize that in their whole life, suffering.

B: Why does everything center on suffering?

M: What isn't? Doesn't mean you have to be attached to it and feel negative about it, but I mean what isn't suffering in this world? Nothing! Everything is impermanent. There's not one thing that you can tell me that's stable in this world. Nothing! Think about it.

B: Well everything is always changing. I mean nothing stays the same.

M: Yeah. I know. So you can't hold on to anything. When you hold on to things, that's where you get suffering. When we think we are things that we are not, you get suffering. You know what I mean? Like when we think we are with feelings, we are our bodies, we are our minds.

B: Umhm.

M: [Massey speaks to someone in the background] What's up, Tiger? Where you going? Huh? What? What do you want, these? You going to bed? [Someone answers in the background: Yeah.] Yeah! (?: Yeah, yeah, yeah!) Nice.

B: She's making progress.

M: Yeah.

B: Pretty soon she's going to understand all the things you say.

M: She's good. She wouldn't get mad. She always takes care of me. She gave me a refrigerator you know, because one day someone gave me some juice and the next day she saw me drinking it, and it was hot.

B: Uh huh.

M: She sent her son out, gave him some money and made him buy me a refrigerator to put in my room.

B: That small refrigerator? (M: Yeah) That's nice.

M: When I went to New York she gave me fifty bucks. Of course she has arthritis obviously. I used to treat her. Get rid of the pain for two days then it would come back. She's old. Her bones react.

B: What do you, how did you treat her?

M: Acupuncture in that sense, before, I don't treat her any more. She's too old, too sensitive.

B: Really?

M: Yeah, my needles are too strong, too much energy. I'm not suppose to touch women, so I can't message her.

B: How about just medicine?

M: She takes too much medication for her heart. And I don't want to complicate matters any worse than they already are.

B: Oh, so she's gone to a western doctor?

M: Yeah.

B: Where do you have to go? Downstairs?

M: No, right here. I'm just putting my shoes on. My sandals rather, I don't wear shoes [few words unclear]. Remember that.

B: How about when you guys go outside?

M: I wear these! You can put that off for a second. [Tape is shut off for a moment.] [Massey is whispering:] Mike, do you have any tapes of you playing the guitar?

B: Oh, Yeah! I do!

M: Oh do you? Bring them by and let me hear it some time.

B: I have an old open real. It's made a long time ago. You'll have to dub it on a cassette. Oh yeah, we were going to talk about the string and all that.

M: What happened to Sao Khon?

B: I don't know.

M: Best thing to do with him is bring all your stuff in. Once you get him talking just flip it on. He's hard to sit, make him sit down and (--)

B: Somebody recorded an interview with him.

M: Oh really!

B: Someone who was working on this project last summer.

M: I wonder who that was?

B: I could tell you when I get back. I have it in my other bag.

M: I take, I'm going to take five.

B: I took four.

M: Take them before you go to bed tonight.

B: What is this called?

M: Ningow.

B: Ningow?

M: [Talking in Cambodian] No poison. (B: No poison) I give this to babies. This works unbelievable for conjunctivitis, ear problems.

B: What, a lot of the people here practice Chinese medicine? No? Just you.

M: Sao Khon is a good doctor, herbal doctor. He has no supplies though.

B: Yeah.

M: He's stranded because he's, he has the ability, but he doesn't have the supplies.

B: Yeah, but the plants don't grow here.

M: Mm.

B: Yeah, I asked at the market, you know, if he imported or sold any of the herbs that they use for medicine, he said, "no."

M: You mean Joe?

B: Yeah, Joe. I don't think he could get them.

M: He can get them.

B: I don't think he wants to get into it then.

M: Probably not, because you need somebody who knows how to do that stuff.

B: I mean, where can you get them? Boston?

M: Mm, Chinatown. Most grocery stores have a drug store in them.

B: Umhm. It would be interesting to find out what he uses. How he uses it.

M: Sometimes he chews them up. He chews the herbs up, and he sprays it on the person.
[makes sound]

B: Oh, yeah.

M: A certain part of chanting, it blows, have you seen that before?

B: I heard about it. I haven't seen it.

M: You see it. If you stay here all day and you just kind of like live here you can (--)

B: Yeah.

M: Actually if you want I can make you that, you know where that bed is downstairs?

B: Umhm.

M: I can make you a little corner there, lamp and everything, and a desk. You can just stay here. You can see a lot more that way. You don't have to be asking me to sit down and tape record all the time. You can just see what goes on. You can go hang around with her, [Massey coughs] if you want. If somebody comes in you can have them translate for you. You know, just talk to the people. They like it when Americans talk to them.

B: Umhm.

M: They're a little bit shy at first, but they're, they're nice. When I first came here I treated a few women. And Monks aren't suppose to touch women, you know, it's strict.

B: Right.

M: But, Sao Khon gave me permission to do that, because I'm a good doctor. And like a lot of the women, they wouldn't tell me what was wrong with them. I had one woman, she hadn't had her period for eight years. She wouldn't tell me that, because it was related to that.

B: Right.

M: Sexual stuff. It's funny.

B: I know one traditional practice, I don't know if it's done here, among Cambodians is to isolate a girl when she first starts to menstruates. I think for a month.

M: I don't know. I don't know about that.

B: Yeah, in like a dark place. Get a room, or something. Can't come out.

M: Strange.

B: I mean that's how (--)

M: Primitive.

B: Well, it's just how they see it. [long pause]

M: Sometimes we go to peoples' houses, like Laotian people especially. They'll bring two Buddha images, or one, or two, or three actually. And we put a string from the Buddha image to a bowl of water, down through the hands of all the Monks, and through all the, outside wall of the whole house and around the windows. That's when they do like an exorcism. This string is just for the vibration you know, that's all.

B: Now you would do an exorcism what? If there were what, ghosts, demons? What?

M: Ah, if they would just feel that they have mental problems, or not good luck, or they just want to get that exorcised out of them. So we do a long ceremony that lasts about two and a half hours. Just straight chanting. And then we have two buckets. See those plastic buckets over there? We stand candles in them. You know the big candle stands down there with long candles. So if there's candles burning in the buckets.

B: In water?

M: Yeah, and with all the string tied to them and everything like that. Then what we do afterwards, after we chant, we take the person goes outside and they have just like a bathing cloth. And we say more what they call [unclear], short incantations. They pour the water over them. Each Monk has one bucket. And people feel better afterwards.

B: Now they do that here. Did you learn that here?

M: Yeah.

B: Or is that (--)

M: No, I learned that here.

B: Something more universal?

M: No, I learned that here. It's Cambodian. Thai, Cambodian, Laos.

B: We have a name for that ceremony?

M: Yeah, I don't, I don't know exactly what it is though. Everybody tells me they're getting a bath. I'm going to go get a bath from Sao Khon. I say, "yeah, really does he wash behind the ears, or what?"

B: Do people bring ah, little figures here?

M: Yeah, all those are people, they belong to people. They bring them here and leave them here to get charged up.

B: Oh, I see.

M: This is like the charge, the main charge! (B: Yeah right) [laughs] Yes, we're down at the Buddha Image Charging Station today in North Chelmsford. We're getting a few of our Buddha statues charged up for our son. He's moving out and going to college.

B: [Unclear comment]

M: People do that. Like if they're moving to California, they'll bring all their Buddha images here. Leave them sitting here and they'll stick them all in their car so they'll have a safe trip out there. Yeah, sure. There's about fifty-eight of them up there last I counted.

B: Yeah, there's a lot of them. I noticed they're, they're different kinds.

M: Yeah, we've got everything from Japanese to Thai, to Cambodian, Tibetan, Swilanka.

B: It's just a matter of how he's dressed.

M: Yeah, it's just the cultural interpretation of the person.

B: Yeah.

M: I mean I can't see some dude with a hairdo like that walking around India twenty-five hundred years ago. I just, I mean it couldn't be that manicured. You know what I mean?

B: What's that one, with the, see with the big headdress?

M: Oh, that's from a um, that's from a story in the Buddhist time when he was practicing meditation. It was very bad weather and the serpent, or snake coiled himself around him and protected him. That's when they, the Cambodians like that motif. The seven dragon heads. (B: Hm) Seven cobras. [long pause] Give my back a rest.

B: I see mike stands up here.

M: Yeah, we use those when we chant. When there's lots of people in here, it's really funny

nobody ever keeps quiet during the ceremony. People are always doing a million things at once, you know what I mean? Nobody ever, nobody ever, it seems like nobody ever gets into the spiritual aspect of it. They just let us do that part of it by chanting.

B: Is that unusual?

M: Nnn, not really. Most Southeast Asian places I've been to besides the Chinese they're always very quiet. Chinese are very quiet. Southeast Asians they're pretty, you know, do what you want when you want. It's really funny, they're really strict in some ways, and in other things they just don't really care. Like the kids, they don't manage the children in here at all. And other things like about bowing to the Monks, they're really strict about it, you know.

B: Like what?

M: Bowing to the Monks.

B: Oh! [pause] I noticed it's pretty relaxed here. In terms of you know, people interacting with the Monks and everything.

M: Yeah, this place's main function is as a Cambodian Social Center right now. That's why we bought the house next door so we could have Monks residence.

B: Which house?

M: Right directly next door here.

B: Oh!

M: So that Monks can live like Monks live in Asia.

B: Separated.

M: Yeah, separated from society a little more so, a little more time to practice. And it's necessary, you know. A lot of the young Monks in this country have no training, including myself, because there's no Monastery to go to where they can train you, you know what I mean? Just kind of have to do everything on your own. Sao Khon is a great man to live with because he's been through that. He's had a lot of experience in all the different phases of Monastic Management. Knows how to do everything, you know. He knows (--)

B: So why couldn't someone like Sao Khon set up training?

M: Well you can, but you need a lot of support for that. You need money and a place. You need ongoing support, you know. What he's trying to do here is pay for this building. The other one's paid for. When the buildings paid for he's going to, what he wants to do is he want's to start training like they did in the old country. Have the Monks go out for Alms with their bowl.

B: Umhm..

M: Have them deliver a sermon every fifteen days.

B: Formal sermon?

M: What's the matter?

B: That would be, I'm just thinking that would be tough to go out with your for, with your bowl for Alms in this.

M: But see what you would do is (--)

B: You'd have to just kind of stick to the Asian Community.

M: Yeah, you'd condense, you may have what they call condensed, I call it a Condensed Alms Round. You just line the people up every ten, or fifteen feet, you put a family. That way on the weekends or, you just restrict it to weekends, or special holidays. People can line up out there along the street, and it would be good for us and good for them, you know.

B: I think it would be good for the non-Asians to see it too.

M: Yeah. (B: I mean) It's a, it's a very definite part of the practice of being a Buddhist Monk. The name "Biku" means mendicant or beggar. Not really beggar. You can't really beg for food, but in a sense you are begging for food. That's what the word Biku means. That's what a Monk's title is. He's a Biku like, Sao Khon's name is [sounds like "Damatero Biku"] You know, all Monks have that name Biku. I don't have that name. I'm Sumanara, it means I'm a novice. That's what Biku means. And he feels that you have to preserve the religion, and you have to keep the customs somewhat intact to make the transition to this country. You know what I mean?

B: Yeah, but I mean even he's having a hard time. He can't, he can't go out and do the things outside he's suppose to do.

M: Yeah.

B: He can't walk. I guess he can!

M: He can, but who wants to get bothered. Just because you want to live your life the way you want. You know?

B: Need a place, need a retreat.

M: Huh?

B: Need a retreat. A place out in the woods. [long pause] Is there any kind of a national

organization?

M: National? I think there's a National Cambodian Federation of Buddhist Groups.

B: Yeah, that's what I mean, religious (--)

M: There's a Thai group of, and there's a, I think there's a, I think all the major representations of Buddhism. Like the Chinese has a foun, a united group in The United States and Canada. The Tibetans do. The um, the Vietnamese do. The Japanese do. I think they all have like a, their own little groups. There's no real like ah, cooperative between them.

B: Right. But I mean even if you had a Cambodian one, they have no funding to help establish a training center anyway.

M: No, they're just basically trying to get the people to be generous and keep the religion in their mind. And then make the other part of it later on.

B: So if you go outside here, you get hassled by (--)

M: I've been hassled, yeah.

B: By kids?

M: No! Grown-ups.

B: Really?

M: Workers, like the guys at the Electric Company next door. The construction guys down the, you know, older guys, my age and a little older.

B: Yeah, what do they say?

M: You know, the usual shit. Hey, where'd you get the fucking curtain, man? Hey, Hari Krishna, there's no airports around here, what are you doing here? You know, stuff like that. Most of it's just because they don't know who you are. Once you talk to them, they like you. Like some people, I was walking down the street one day. And this punk rock girl, she had her hair shaved on the side and it was all spikes. It was like eight o'clock in the morning. They were just waking up, her and her boyfriend were crawling out of a car in Lowell. And they saw me walking down the street. And his girl started laughing so hard she fell down. And I said hey, baby what's the matter? Never seen a real punk rocker before? I said I gave up on everything. I'm a total revolutionary, you know get with it. And they started talking to me. We got to be friends, her and her boyfriend, you know. And they asked me what I was into. You know, I told them. Hey, I'm a Buddhist Monk. I'm not a freak, or a weirdo. [laugh]

B: Well people have to understand.

M: Yeah, I think it was a Greek guy that came here and brought some clothes here the other day. And when he saw me he said, "do you have to wear that toga, you have to wear that toga outside?" I said, "Yeah, this is a Monk, Monk's cloth's like a priest. You have to wear a collar all the time, or you have to wear black clothes, you know. This is the same thing. Just the way we live so people know what we are." He said, "Well don't you get hassled about that in public?" "Yeah." "Well doesn't it bother you?" "Well, yeah, it bothers me, but I like Buddhism so much I put up with a lot of that crap, just to have it, be able to come to this country in some form or another, you know." We'll be right back, ah, Doc. What are you going to play for us for this commercial break? [laughter] Can never imitate Johnny Carson.

B: No.

M: He's hard.

B: It's his voice.

M: Ed Sullivan's easy. Johnny Carson's hard.

B: Carson's is, just your straight, there's no, nothing really peculiar about it.

M: And mono. Yeah, the Electric Company guys were yelling at me one day, "hey, what are you anyway?" I said, "I work for Mass Electric. What's it look like? What are you guys, Buddhist Monks wearing those goofy yellow helmets? [laughs] They started laughing. It was funny. "We never talked to no Monks before." I goes, "well there's not that many in this country, you know. You got a question ask me, talk to me. I'm not a weirdo."

B: So they talked to you?

M: Yeah, they wave to me and everything now. Construction guys, they're a little more hard nosed. They're more you know, Italian workers, migrant workers I call them. They drive all the way from Chelsea and stuff, East Boston and come to work here to put sewer pipes in, you know.

B: I guess that's what they were doing down in ah, [unclear].

M: Yeah, sewerage.

B: They have this street blocked off, detour.

M: It's funny, I was walking down by he driveway. Hey Al! Al! Three or four of them go down the driveway looking at me. I turn around and they all make like they're not looking at me. I go "Hey, check it out. Check out these legs." They go, "Hey, that guy speaks English", you know. Say, "Yeah, I speak English, I worked on cars for twenty years, Jack." I speak regular straight street English with them, and they, it really blows them away that, to associate that language with the way I look, you know.

B: But when Sao Khon goes out, he can't understand, I mean he can't understand a lot of what they're saying anyway.

M: Yeah, he always asks me, what are hey saying? They're telling us we're ugly and balled. Huh, what's that mean, ugly? Ugly means no good, lumbak. Oh, oh, oh ugly, okay. I like ugly. [laughs] He's funny, you know.

B: Do you think it would be any different if this Temple is you know, closer to where most of the people live?

M: No, because you're in America. When you go out there's no way you can avoid going through American neighborhoods. There's just no way, you know. That doesn't really matter that much, because Monks don't go out that much. And I never go shopping. It's just sometimes, like if I wanted to go out for a walk in the woods, you know, I'd think twice about it. I'd take a couple of guys with me. I wouldn't want to get jumped, or get beat up by somebody, you know? I don't know, that stuff happens. I'm not paranoid about it. You know what I mean? I can still, I can still take care of myself. But, uh, sometimes you think twice about going some places, because you don't know what's going to happen there, you know?

B: Just because you stick out?

M: Yeah. I mean I wouldn't go downtown Lowell, like say eleven o'clock at night I would not go down downtown Lowell looking for somebody's house if I didn't know where they lived. I wouldn't, I just wouldn't do it on foot. I wouldn't do it.

B: Now you're allowed to drive a car?

M: Mm, I haven't really confronted that issue at all.

B: Oh, Sao Khon doesn't drive.

M: No he doesn't have a license. See I have a driver's licence. I imagine if we got in a jam, or something, I'd drive.

B: But you don't think it would be right?

M: Well, they were letting the Monks drive before. And then they decided against it, because a lot of the people wee saying stuff about the Monks driving around too much and stuff like that.

B: I mean it's interesting how, you know an old religion in a very different culture comes over here and tries to make it.

M: Yeah, well, it's (--)

B: There's got to be some compromises.

M: Buddhism had to do that I every country it's gone to, okay. Because one, it came from India, which is a hot climate. The temperatures you know, average a hundred degrees all year round. Then it moved up to Tibet, Nepal, Bhutan, [Sikim?], it's all in the mountains. It's freezing cold up there. There's nothing to eat up there. You know, so the robes had to change. The Monks started wearing boots and hats. Then went to China. The Chinese being such meticulous scholars, and so much into etiquette and tact, and all that stuff that they just made everything really fine, whereas the Tibetan Monks, it's sort of like crude, you know what I mean? They just wear the same robes, but real thick. And the Chinese tailored everything up to make it real nice. And they tailored the monastic system into the Chinese Monastic System. It wasn't really a monastic system in the beginning. The Buddha just said, "hey, you want to live like me? Come on, let's go. Let's live together. And that's how the whole thing started. There was never even any ordinations. He used to say, "Ahe biku". That mean come on, come, come Monk, become a Monk. That's all. There was no ordinations or, no rules or nothing. If you wanted to become a Monk and shave your head, and wear orange cloth, everybody just assumed that you had to be celibate, and not be intoxicated, and not steal and lie, all that stuff. In that time of history, it was just assumed that whoever wore the orange, or saffron cloth and had shaven head was a renounced man, or woman.

B: Women could be Monks too?

M: No, not then, but later on. The first monastic, or contemplative order of women was Buddhist in this world. And there's a very revolutionary thing that the Buddha did in India. There were 96 religions at the time, all mainly based in Hinduism Theology. Polytheism, Monotheism, you know, (B: Umhm, yeah) all that stuff. And the women, their job was in the kitchen in the house and taking care of the babies and all that. And the Buddha did a very revolutionary thing by giving women not an equal place, but he gave the opportunity to practice meditation, and teach them, and let them become nuns. [Long pause] Boy, that thing goes fast, huh? Is it almost over on this side?

B: Thirty minutes.

M: Thirty minutes.

B: Or sixty. It's a sixty minute tape.

M: [unclear]

B: [unclear]

M: [Laughs]

B: Do people bring all of these things that are up there on the altar?

M: Yeah. Those are all offerings.

B: Flowers, candles (--)

M: They bring artificial flowers, because you can't go picking flowers here like you can in Cambodia. You just walk around the jungle you can pick beautiful flowers. Here you can't find them. You have to buy them. So they just buy artificial ones, because they last longer. [laughs]

B: Some people make them in the community.

M: Yeah, yeah those lotus flowers there, some lady made those.

B: Yeah. I know Joe was selling them at the store, and I asked him about it. They come in every day. Same with ah, these things. What are those? They're like temples.

M: Yeah, I don't know what they are. I'm not sure.

B: They look like Angkor Wat, or something, (M: yeah) or Temples. Are they off... I guess they're offerings.

M: Some kind of offering, yeah.

B: And the candles? This one has a little slot in it. Obviously (--)

M: Yeah, it's a donation box.

B: Yeah.

M: It's for some particular fund or something by the looks of it. because there's four of them here.

SIDE ONE COMES TO AN END
SIDE TWO BEGINS

M: Yeah. Everybody picks their particular thing that they want to specialize in.

B: It's tied to a specific countries.

M: In China like for instance, in China they have five different schools of Buddhism. [Clears throat] Okay, five main schools of Buddhism. They study all five different aspects of Buddhism. One is a Discipline School, one is the Pure Land School.

B: The what?

M: Pure Land.

B: Pure Land?

M: Yeah. They recite [Montres?], hoping to be reborn in this Pure Land where there are several [unclear] and Buddhist already living there teaching Buddhism to people that take birth there. Ah, Discipline, Pure Land, Zen, ah, Analytical Logic School, and the ah, Esoteric School.

B: Do those equate with other, sects of Buddhism anywhere else?

M: No. That's totally, totally, it has the same things. Like in Analytical Logic School that's like [Abiduma?]. That's the same as like in Burma they study that intensely. That's mainly what they study in Burma is Abiduma. Cambodia mainly they study the Dumaparta, which is like a collected saying, poetic sayings of the Buddha that are put in numerical ah, verses like ones, twos, threes, fours, fives, like that, eights. And they studied the [unclear], which is um, description of practice from a really theoretical perspective. It's written more by a scholar than a practiced Monk, but it has completely compiled everything in Buddhism. Condensed it into one volume, called the [unclear], or Path of Purification. [Unclear].

B: So is it prescriptive? I mean it's telling people how they should live?

M: Yeah. It tells you everything about how to practice meditation. How to build a monastery. What are the eighteen faults of a monastery. Where to put a monastery. Which direction this should be in. How to, you know, how to make the water. And how to make medicine. How to tell a good teacher from a bad teacher. The credentials of a teacher and you know, like that. It tells you everything about Buddhism that you want to know basically. And that's what, Cambodians study that. And they also study another book called the [sounds like "Melinda Panha"], which is logic. And it's a discussion between this ah, Buddhist Monk who's fairly young, Venerable Nagasina, but he was enlightened at an early age, and ah, this Greek King, Meander. And he, this king presents all these questions to him. And he asks for several explanations on each one. So it turns into logic, debate on logic. It's good.

B: That's incredible. That was in, that must have been recorded, or at least remembered from ah (--)

M: Yeah, it was recorded.

B: A couple of centuries B.C.

M: It was recorded. It wasn't, that one's not by memorization. Most of them are by memorization. All Buddha Sutras or, Sutra means garland, or thread, words threaded together. That when they, Buddha spoke they called it a Sutra. And his cousin [Anada?] was his right hand man. He memorized. He had an incredible memory. And he'd stand there and memorize all the Buddhist discourses, and repeat them for people. And they always start up with "thus have I heard". [Saying unclear] Always, "thus have I heard". Like here, [speaking in another language], same thing, "Thus have I heard". At one time the exalted one was [rest of comment unclear]. See, he describes the place. Then at a, then a certain [davor?], or celestial being in the last watch of the night lit up the whole of the grove. And he approached the Buddha in the end. After he approached the Buddha her revert, he respect him and he stood at one side. And

standing there at one side, he talked to the Buddha like this. "There's many celestial beings in men who have pondered on blessings and they long for safety. What are the highest blessings?" And so the Buddha will go on and tell them that's what they call a Sutra, or Suta. I got lost, where were we?

B: Talking about the different varieties of Buddhism.

M: Oh yeah, okay.

B: Talking about the Cambodian. Now is that, it that ah, or is this book

M: This, we made twenty of these when I became a Monk.

B: What's Hali chanting?

M: Bali, Bali chanting. With translation, see. Like [Massey chants in Bali] Not to consort with fools.

B: Now who made that? The book?

M: This book? Maya. This is from a translation from Thailand, but I had this. I had the original and it was all falling apart. So I twenty of these printed.

B: Oh, okay.

M: From a copied list.

B: Do any other people use that, here?

M: Yeah. [long pause on tape]

B: Or did you take instruction, here?

M: What? In Bali? No.

B: Yeah, or just in anything before you became a Monk here.

M: No. I came up here and talked to Sao Khon for about three month. And he knew I'd already practiced Buddhism. A fair amount, you know. He knew I already knew I wanted to be a Monk. He knew I knew what I was getting into. So. [coughs] I didn't really know I was getting into it like this though. I didn't think it was going to be this strange.

B: But it's different than the Chinese Temple?

M: Yeah. Much different.

B: Is that where you've been mostly? The Chinese Temples?

M: Yeah, mostly. Umhm. At my house. And my house is always like a Chinese Temple, Monastery.

B: So what's the main difference?

M: Well, it's just, everything's unstructured.

B: Here?

M: You never know who's going to eat breakfast, and how much food they're going to cook, or who's going to come and cook lunch, or.

B: Is that, do you think just be, because of the way they are here? Or just because it's ah, the community is (--)

M: No it's just the way the Cambodians and the Southeast Asians Buddhism is like that. They're very laid back, sleepy kind of people.

B: What happens here on Sundays?

M: It's never the same. It never is. Sunday I'm not here that much anymore.

B: That's right, you said that.

M: I go to the Chinese Temple. But usually breakfast, somebody will come and cook breakfast. Then some families will come for lunch. They'll ask for the five precepts. We give hem the, Sao Khon will give them the five precepts. And then we'll chant blessings and stuff like that. And then if you know, just people want to have a little mem, memorial things to their relatives, they just take one of these things, put a thing of incense on it, some candles, some cigarettes and some money, or something like that. Come over and bow to us three times, hand it to us. What do you want? Okay. And then he'll tell me what we have to chant.

B: I saw, they did that after breakfast that one day. Now the offering, are those for the Monk ?

M: Yeah.

B: So Sunday service is not (--)

M: There's no (--)

B: Much different?

M: No, there's no real structure to it. I mean this place here, it's just, if you need to see the Monk about something, you just come and see him. Because everybody's so different. You can't

really have just like one particular service for everybody. Do you know what I mean?

B: Amhm.

M: At least that's what I get out of it.

B: So it's not like everybody shows up here at 9:00 in the morning, and something structured happens.

M: No. There are people usually around 10:00 they show up here on Sunday if they want to hear chanting, because we usually chant on Sunday.

B: Uh huh. So what happens at the Chinese Temple? If it's different.

M: They practice.

B: It's very structured?

M: Yeah. They have a very structured regiment. Is that right?

B: Yeah, regiment.

M: Regiment, regiment, regiment, yeah, he was in the Archie Comics.

B: Yeah [laugh]

M: They're very structured. They're more into practicing Buddhism than just hanging around the Temple. You know, they have no Monks there, except for me. So they (--)

B: How long have they had a Temple?

M: About two years. It's not really a Temple. It's more like an association. And one of the members has a house. And they've set aside a room for library, a room for a meditation room, and ah, like a little dining where they all eat together.

B: So the people that go there are what, Chinese Americans?

M: Chinese yeah, Taiwan. Mostly students at the University of Lowell, and Harvard. [pause]

B: What did they do before they had, before you came out there?

M: They just had their weekly meetings.

B: Oh!

M: I don't really officiate at anything. I just kind of like I'm the resident Monk there. I just

come over there and kind of join the program. And I lead a meditation group in the afternoon.

B: Are you helping instruct people here?

M: Yeah. I have lots of students.

B: In meditation and so on? How can, how do you do that?

M: What do you mean?

B: Ah, well it's hard to communicate.

M: Most of the people that want, approach me about that can usually speak English well enough. I can teach them.

B: What, are they young people?

M: Um, there's a variety. I have some old women that I teach. Two high school kids.

B: What, do they come at a certain time each week, or just?

M: No, they just show up when they have time.

B: They just show up? Uh huh.

M: They say, "John, what can you teach me today?" I say, "what do you want to learn?"

B: That sounds like the Socratic method to me. Answer a question with a question.

M: Yeah, works good.

B: Is that the way of Buddhism too?

M: That's the way I was taught.

B: What's, what's the ah, kind of the bottom line for Buddhism?

M: What do you mean?

B: What's the intention?

M: Refrain from evil. Cultivate the good. Purify ones mind. That's what they call in Buddhism, they call it unclear, or this is the rules for everybody.

B: And what are the five precepts?

M: No killing, no stealing, no lying, no elicit sexual con, ah, activity and no intoxication. Basic.

B: Yeah.

M: Basic good all American.

B: It's like I said, it's like the Ten Commandments.

M: Morality, yeah.

B: Reduced to five.

M: Yeah, throw in a little wisdom and meditation practice and you've got something. You know. That's the one thing I never liked about Christianity. They don't teach you how to practice anything. Just tell you what to do.

B: Or not to do.

M: Yeah, believe this, don't believe that.

B: Well, meditation's definitely not a [laughs] (--)

M: Well, they have meditation in the Catholic Church, but you have, you have to find a good priest, or a good Monk that will teach you and take the time. And if you're not, like the Catholic Monks, if you're not a Monk they don't bother with you usually. How many Catholic Monks have you seen? None. How many Catholic Monks have any Catholics seen, none. They're all cloistered. In some ways it's good for the Monk to live like that. But in other ways it's bad for society, because they never get to see what they support, you know.

B: Okay. When you talk about say, a Buddhist Forest Monk, (M: umhm) Does he teach?

M: Yeah. Sure.

B: When he comes out?

M: Yeah. They have to. Buddhist Monk has to teach every, every fifteen days. You have to, you know, have contact with lay people. Its against the rules not to. They support us. We support them.

B: So are meditation and mindfulness connected?

M: Yeah. You have to learn meditation in order to be mindful.

B: And what's being mindful?

M: Mindful is when you know right now what's going on. You don't think about the past and

you don't speculate about the future. Mindfulness is when you're lifting something, you know. I'm just lifting it. You're not attached to what it is, or where you're going with it, or what the value of it is, or any of that stuff. And that's being mindful. You just know what you're doing right now. Like when you're walking, you just know, I'm walking, walking. Not thinking about looking here, and smelling this, and feeling that and touching that. You know what I mean? Just one thing.

B: So what's the value of that?

M: What's the value of that?

B: Not the value, what's the point?

M: You're not confused all the time. You just know things.

B: Is it suppose to eliminate suffering?

M: No, it doesn't eliminate suffering, you still suffer, but you're not attached to suffering. You know what I mean? (B: So it's a detachment) There's a big difference. You're, you're, no matter what you do in this world, as long as you live in this world and you have a body, you're going to suffer, because basically we're made out of five things that are impermanent. We have a body. We have feelings that are associated with a body, and a mind, and indifference. We have memories, perception, volition, or the ability to do things. And we have consciousness. Those, all those five things are what make up the personality. One belongs to the body group, and four belong to the mind group. Okay. All those things are impermanent. And all those things when we associate them with us, with ourselves, like our body, this is my body, it's beautiful, it's never going to get old, then that's delusion and you have suffering. Have physical suffering. Feelings, oh, I feel so good today. Nah, nah, and all the other side comes. You know what I mean? Buddhism's not very deep, really. It's just very simple. It just explains what everything is, you know. That's all it does, it just tells you what everything is. It doesn't use any conjecture or speculation. You can find it all out for yourself. All, you just sit down and think about it. Practice meditation.

B: So whatever truths there are come from within?

M: Yeah!

B: I mean you have them.

M: Yeah, everybody has that. Everybody has suffering. There's not one person in the world that doesn't have suffering. I don't care how much money they have, or how much solitude they have in their life. Everybody has suffering. Some degree of suffering in their life, everyday. You know. Easy to prove too. I can make people suffer very easy. Just sit there like that, until I tell you to move.

B: You don't have to prove it.

M: No! Two or three hours you won't be able to. You'll say, "John, let me out of this position will yeah. I'm suffering to beat the band here." Lot of people tell me that suffering is "bullshit". I tell them, "okay, stand there, don't move any part of your body." "Hey, can I move now?" Five minutes later. "Why?" "I don't feel good. My body hurts, my legs are killing me." "I thought you didn't have any suffering? Control it. You have control over your body. You're in control."

B: Now is that one of the points of meditation?

M: The first thing you have to learn about meditation is you have to learn about yourself. You look, you look at your body and the mind. Nature of the body and the mind, how they're always changing and going different ways and like that. That's the first thing you learn. You have to learn about yourself. Investigate yourself. It's like writing a class paper. You have to do research first. You know. You have to research yourself, question. This body of mine, this mind.

B: Are there certain instructive ways to do that?

M: Yeah.

B: Questions to ask?

M: Mm, not really questions. You just observe things. Like when you first sit down. Teacher might tell you just observe your breathing. You'll start to observe your breathing, all of a sudden your mind starts racing on you. Your body becomes uncomfortable. Now what did you learn from that? Well, my mind doesn't stay still, and my bodies uncomfortable. So they'll tell you keep watching your breathing. When you start thinking about your mind and your body, go back to your breathing. Notice that your thinking away from that, and go back to your breathing. You always go back to your breathing. You take one thing, like some people repeat words. Some people use breathing. Some people use this. Some people walk.

B: Just something to focus on.

M: Yeah, just, basically that's what your using. Every teacher has a different way of practice. There's basically ah, forty-eight ways to practice, actually there's eight-four thousand ways to practice meditation, but there's forty-eight basic ways they teach. You know? Every teacher has his own thing that he developed. And they teach their students like that. Or they teach them a way that you know, you can see. Like there's not really one system. Like you can't, in Buddhism they never say everybody has to practice, mindfulness, or breathing, or it's wrong. Oh yeah, meditation, they never say that. They say, "whatever your problem is, you have to identify your own problem, or have a teacher help you identify your problem. Then give you the appropriate medicine for it." You know?

B: Now do a lot of people that come to the temple here, are they, do they practice meditation?

M: Yeah. I wouldn't say a great deal of them, but I would say there's a small minority, majority

let's call it something like that. You know what I mean?

B: I wonder why more don't? If it's (--)

M: A lot of people don't have time. And they think only Monks can meditate. Like when I first became a Monk people said, "Oh, I'd like to meditate, but I'm not a Monk." I say, "hey, I think I got ripped off at my ordination. They forgot to give me my meditative abilities, because they didn't give me that. All they gave me was these robes, and a whole bunch of words to say." And I said, "I practiced meditation much more before I was a Monk than I did now, then I do now." You know sitting meditation.

B: You said the Monks here meditate lying down, or some of them.

M: Yeah. There's four ways to practice. Sit, stand, walk and lie.

B: Meditate while your walking?

M: Yeah. Sitting meditation, walking meditation, standing meditation, and lying down meditation. Lying down is usually like this [Massey is demonstrating].

B: On your side?

M: Yeah, on the right side. I have to lay this way obviously. Anyway like this, sometimes like this. Sao Khon likes to lay like this.

B: Now do most people just pick one of those? Usually?

M: Usually everybody sits. And walks, that's the most popular. Lying down, not many people do that really I don't think. And standing up, many people do that. Standing is hard.

B: I think walking would be hard.

M: No walking's easy. I'll show you. [Massey is demonstrating] Walking meditation?

B: Yeah.

M: You learn a simple technique. Like this is a Burmese Technique they call it. It's where you label all activities of the body and mind. Like, now I'm thinking in my mind, standing, standing, standing, just standing. I'm just mindful of standing. I'm not repeating standing, I'm not spelling the word standing in my mind. I'm just mindful of the fact that I'm standing. Now I know I'm going to walk, so I have an intention. So I make a mental note of that intention. Now I'm shifting my weight, lifting, moving, touching, placing, standing. Lifting, moving, touching, placing. You just walk like that. You break your walking into simple steps.

B: Right.

M: That's how you learn it. That's the first step of walking meditation. I walk fast. I walk like this. [Massey is demonstrating] But I learned the slow way first. You know?

B: So you break it down into little units of matter.

M: Yeah.

B: What you're doing now.

M: What you're doing now. And when you lose track of where you are, you stop and you stand there until you regain your mindfulness. When you regain your mindfulness you continue with your practice.

B: So the implication of walking meditation is that external things, the environment, stimuli (M: Hey!) aren't going to disrupt your meditation?

M: All you're going to do is, you're not going to stop all those things from existing. You're just not going to act on all the im, inputs. You know, it's like when you become a Monk you're celibate. You still have impulses. And you still like women and breasts and all that stuff is still very attractive to you. You know what I mean? Doesn't mean you just stopped everything because your a monk. You still have those things coming up in your mind, but the thing is you don't act on it. You know what I mean? Normally what we do is, when we're a regular person, like me in my business, I'd see beautiful women come in my shop. I just, automatically that sexual side of you takes over. That ego side of you, man and woman thing happens. And you just start talking, without even knowing it, you flirt and like that. And when you're a Monk you just don't do, you don't act on those impulses. You just observe them, and realize what they are and then they go away. And the next thing comes up, it's like that all day long.

B: But isn't it easier to meditate if you know, if you're isolated?

M: Yeah, it's easier.

B: You know it's quiet. It's not too bright.

M: Yeah, it's easier.

B: So your senses aren't being (--)

M: It's easier, but when you're, when you don't have that situation, you just have to use what you have. It's like somebody says, "well, we don't have nothing to cook this food in, but we're all starving." What are you going to do? Sit there and starve until somebody figures out how to make a pot? No, you just figure out ways to eat it. You know, so meditation is the same way. If you don't have an ideal place, quiet, you just have to learn how to use the environment. Like here, I use hearing a lot. When I sit outside the train goes by, and the generator's humming over there, and there's people running around. I just listen to hearing. It's all on the outside. It's not inside me.

B: Yeah, Sao Khon was talking about the music that the birds make. Music of the forest. He doesn't like the city. It's not music to him. It's noise.

M: It's noise in the forest too. The jungle's very loud.

B: Yeah, but to him, [unclear] of music.

M: Yeah, well he grew up there you know. It's like with some people gun fire doesn't bother them. To me, if you shot a few rounds off next to me I'd wonder what was going on, you know.

B: Sure.

M: It's a matter of environment. [Pause] I like doing this stuff. [laugh] A little holy water for the rug. [laugh] How you feeling?

B: I feel good.

M: Yeah, good. How's your tongue?

B: It changed.

M: Did it really? (B: Yeah) [Both laugh] It's just stuff that works, you know?

B: When did you first get into Chinese Medicine?

M: About sixteen years ago.

B: Who was practicing it?

M: My teacher, a Chinese Monk I learned with. I was always interested in medicine anyway. I like that stuff. I was always, I liked it.

B: Yeah, you too.

M: I put a lot of time into it of my own. You know?

B: What, are there written (M: Oh, yeah), lot's of written manuals and stuff.

M: Yeah. Yeah. The oldest one's about thirty-three hundred years old. [Names it in Asian]

B: And they use the same ingredients?

M: Basically, yeah, just about. Same needle points, everything.

B: What does Chinese medicine include then? Acupuncture?

M: Acupuncture, um, massage, (B: Uh huh) exercise, (B: Uh huh) astrology, diet, meditation, (B: medicine) also herbs.

B: What would you call the pills?

M: It's herbal medicine. Those are all made of herbs. It's all herbs. All the ingredients are on there if you have ah, (--)

B: They're not chemicals?

M: No.

B: Well, I can't be (--)

M: I'll show you some of my stuff I have today. I'll take you downstairs and show you some of it.

B: Great wall brand.

M: Boy, this holy waters great for arthritis.

B: You have arthritis?

M: Yeah.

B: From one injury? Just congenital?

M: Mike I have been so banged up in my life.

B: Okay, what did you do to your thumb?

M: I cut it off.

B: How?

M: I fell through a window. And I reached up to grab something and it was an air compressor. And when I pulled on the belts it started up, and it flipped me end over end. It cut three of my fingers off.

B: Wow!

M: It was a heavy experience, man.

B: Yeah, I guess! Were you practicing Buddhism at the time?

M: [laugh] No, I was practicing being a fourteen year old kid who wanted to be a mechanic and work in a garage. I disobeyed my mother, go fuck yourself. I'm going to the garage. I don't want to be a dumb doctor. [laughs] Sixteen years old. Well actually before, I was about fourteen. Before I cut my fingers off I used to draw a lot and paint a lot. And I applied to Rhode Island Institute of Design just for the hell of it.

B: Yeah.

M: Had one of these draw me things. I drew a whole bunch of these draw me things, you know. They came up to see me at my house in Amesbury, and were offering me a scholarship. And I told them, nah, fuck that, I want to be a mechanic. I remember that. I could have gone to that school. I was real arrogant about it too.

B: You're right. Most people don't associate um, mechanics with spiritual, spirituality.

M: Mm, I've had a lot of psychotherapists and psychologists come in, and I just goof on them. Drop things on me. "Oh, yes, that must be from the emergence of plurality, obviously. And phenomenon has not been quite enumerated to that point." And they go "cars?" Yeah, cars. A little psychic realignment here on this one. I used to have a lot of fun goofing on the people, you know. Playing like a dumb mechanic. I'm going, "you dummy." If you people only knew what I was thinking, you'd be doing cartwheels in here. [laughs]

B: So when's the last time you worked on a car?

M: About six and a half months ago.

B: You miss that?

M: Of course I do. I did it for twenty years, man. You know? [laugh] I've got forty thousand dollars worth of tools sitting down in the basement.

B: Where? Here?

M: Yeah. It's the only thing I didn't give up. I gave everything else up. I kept my tools in case I ever needed them. In case I ever had to go to work. In case my father dies and my mother needs me to come and help her, you know?

B: Umhm. Well, you can go back to that.

M: Easy.

B: In terms of being a Monk. Your commitment, you only commit yourself for a certain period of time, right?

M: No. I haven't committed myself for any period of time.

B: But I mean people have become Monks for one week.

M: Yeah, and then they disrobe.

B: It's a kind of obligation to family, or something.

M: Yeah, her son was a Monk for a week. Just so she could see him as a Monk before she passed away.

B: Her son or?

M: Her son, yeah.

B: Her grand, her son?

M: Her son. He lived with me for a week, week and a half. We ate real good that week. His wife came every day and took care of us, two meals a day.

B: Did she bring you some non-meat stuff?

M: Oh, yeah. Most of the people know I'm a vegetarian now.

B: Why did they think it was so funny that ah (--)

M: They thought it was great that you were a vegetarian.

B: I wasn't going to eat meat?

M: I think it's good that you can, people don't eat meat.

B: They think it's good? Why do they?

M: They're just used to it. It's their culture and they don't feel like it's necessary. You don't have to eat meat. Buddhism doesn't say that you have to be a vegetarian, or anything else like that. I'm basically a vegetarian because I really wouldn't want to have somebody to do that to my kids. You know what I mean? If I was a, yeah, well jeese you know, me and the wife are a little bit hungry today. Figured we'd take one of your kids out and barbecue them, you know?

B: [Laughs]

M: Yeah, go right ahead. Which one do you want? The boys or the girls?

B: We'll pick the fat one.

M: Yeah, okay. Take the chubby one. He eats too much anyway. You know? It's the same thing. I tell these people, I say, why do you think the Communists came into your town and just

randomly picked out people and shot them? I says, like the guy that goes fishing. He throws a net in the water. He doesn't care what the fishes name is, who he's related too. He just pulls out.

B: It has nothing to do with the personnel.

M: It's like the Jews, the Jews getting killed in Germany WW II, collective karma. That's all it is. No big mystery. The Cambodians, collective karma. The people in Ethiopia, collective karma. The people in New Ganda, collective karma. Whenever big groups of people like that get annihilated it's for a reason. Why, what was the reason? Because God said, okay uh, yeah the Bernstein's yeah, we've got to let them go. Sorry ah, Sol, tell your brother Jacob to move out of town. [laugh] You know.

B: What is karma?

M: Karma? It's a hard term to describe. Cause and effect. It's like if you plant an apple seed, you're going to get an apple tree, right?

B: Yeah.

M: That's karma. You stab somebody in the back, your always looking.

B: So it's an inevitable sequence?

M: Yeah.

B: Of events?

M: The thing to do is to break the inevitable sequence. And what you have to do first is you have to understand your body and mind. You know? To see how your body and mind react to your environment. Then you can break that sequence. Until you understand your body and mind you aren't going to break nothing but wind. [laugh] You know what I mean? [laugh]

B: How can you break an inevitable sequence though, like planting an apple seed and apple tree?

M: Well, you can break an inevitable sequence of aversion. Like say the inevitable sequence of aversion. If you know something is going to bother you, and you know why it bothers you, and you analyzed it and scrutinized it, the next time it comes up the chances of the bothering you are highly unlikely, unless you let it carry you away again. How am I doing anyway?

B: Great.

M: How are my answers? Are they okay? They make sense?

B: Yeah.

M: Buddhism in a nut shell by John Massey.

B: That's necessary.

M: Yeah.

B: Can't expect outsiders to understand what's going on here.

M: Yeah, I mean if you're really interested in the Buddhist viewspect of this thing you just keep on asking me questions. I can answer anything you have. That's the, that's the best way for me to talk, is if you ask me one little, as you know. You just say a few questions and I'll just start going, you know.

B: How were the questions?

M: Good! What's this tape almost over?

B: Yeah.

M: Go ahead, ask!

TAPE ONE END

TAPE TWO BEGINS

LFP-MB-A002

M: Description of compassion in Buddhism. Somebody says, "what's compassion?" Compassion is being non pretentious, Completely non-pretentious. That's what compassion is. So when's the wife and the kids coming out to meet us.

B: Up here?

M: Yeah. You should bring your wife up so I can meet her, and I can (--)

B: Yeah, I'd like too.

M: Help her health out a little bit.

B: She should come up here.

M: I have lots of Chinese patients over the Chinese Temple. It's really funny. I treated one

person over there and all of a sudden there was five of them here one Sunday afternoon. Sao Khon says, "you can't do this anymore."

B: Why?

M: Too many people. Too much for me, and too much going on.

B: You don't get too many um, American's in here, right?

M: I have three American students.

B: Yeah.

M: One for relaxation. He works at Wang seven days a week. And one from Kent State, and one from my hometown.

B: One from Kent State?

M: I mean Keene State.

B: Oh, okay. I was going to say. [laughs]

M: [Whispers] Kent State. A little Freudian slip there. [Whispers] Freudian slip. [Sings] "Four dead in Ohio!" It's in the key of D [laugh], I think. Let's see, [starts humming]. Yeah, you could play that off in D Cord I bet. It would be like let's see, typical Neil Young cord change. Play the D Cord with all possible accessories applied. So you'd just stick the little thing on one of those adjacent fragmented frets there. [He starts humming again]

B: Yeah, down to E Minor.

M: Yeah, something like that. [laugh] It's frustrating not having a guitar here that I can just (--)

B: There would be nothing wrong with that though.

M: No, it's against the rules.

B: Is it?

M: Yeah, not to en, go to en, seek entertainment, or engage in musical entertainment, or dancing or singing. You're not suppose to do that.

B: Ever? Or just as a Monk?

M: As a Monk.

B: Or anybody in the Temple?

M: No, no, no, no. Lay people can do any of that stuff. This is just for Monks, discipline. You know what do you do if you see a Monk hanging around some barroom. He's not drinking. He's not breaking his rule of chastity. He's being a good Monk, but he's playing in a barroom, and music with some guys. What are you going to think? What the hell is he doing here?

B: No, but (--)

M: [laughs] You know what I mean?

B: If you had a musical instrument here and you played it, it seems to me that's, what's the difference between that and say chanting.

M: Yeah, I do, at Chinese Temple last week I played a guitar, and I was singing some Chinese chanting with a guitar, because I figured out that, a few years back I figured that out. Everything's (--)

B: Is Buddhism pretty open?

M: Yeah.

B: To?

M: Yeah.

B: What are all these pictures? The Buddha in different (--)

M: Previous lives. I don't really know.

B: Previous lives of?

M: Of the Buddha before he became the Buddha in his, in that incarnation 2,531 years ago when he became known as [sounds like: Gotam and Sitata].

B: Umhm, and he knew each of his previous lives?

M: Yeah, you can do that through practice and meditation. You can remember the past.

B: And he described them? (M: Umhm) And that's what these depict?

M: He used those as ways to teach people. His, a lot of people say Buddhism is very contradictory. And it is in a lot of ways if you read all the discourses, but the reason it sounds like that, seems like that is because the Buddha talked to so many different kinds of people with so many different kinds of problems that (--) Like one remedy, like one guy has a headache, because he has a natural headache, another guy's headache because somebody hit him over the head with a pipe. You can't give the same medicine to two people. So you have to use what's

appropriate, and use expedient means to teach people. Buddhism is a whole system of expedience. You know what I mean? Once you get to a certain point where you understand reality and understand your body and mind, you can start to use expedient ways to teach people, you know?

B: Now is Buddha considered to be just a, a great teacher? Or is he considered actually divine?

M: No. He was just a human being like us, but he was a great teacher. He had over the course of many life times built up this um, wholesome propensities? Does that sound right?

B: Yeah. Makes sense.

M: Yeah, he built up all these wholesome propensities and it enabled him to take all these successive births in these suitable places from cause and effect, because he planted the roots for that to happen, to come to fruition. And in his last life as a human being he became the Buddha, because it was just natural for him to do that. Either become a king of the world, or become the Buddha. And he became the Buddha.

B: Was he a religious person before?

M: No, actually if you wanted to (--)

B: I mean, had he been like Hindu, or (--)

M: He was brought up Hindu, but a good description of the Buddha is, would be like a Yuppie. Like a Hindu Yuppie. You know what I mean? Because what he had, his father was the ruler of the northern region, northeastern region of India. I believe it's northeast. And um, he was going to inherit all that property when he became of age, or when he took over the kingdom. And he had a chariot. You know, like he would have like the equivalent of a, of a like a B.M.W. 735, or 745 Turbo, or a Ferrari, or something. He'd have a place in the Riviera, one place in Colorado to go skiing. Every season he had a different house for himself. And he always had women around, playing music, making food for him, dancing for him. Messaging him and having sex with him, you know. He was always just completely pleasurized. He never knew any suffering really. So he was a regular human being like all of us. He saw four things that changed his mind though. He saw a sick person, which he'd never seen before, because his father never let him go out too much. Hey, you don't have to go out into the kingdom. Just hang around here. Look at all the babes I've got lined up for you. You know, look at all the nice food. And you've got the little B.M.W. chariot out there. Just go for a cruise around the back roads of the kingdom there, you know. I mean do whatever you want. Just don't go into town. And he talked his servant into taking him to town. He saw a sick person vomiting. "What's wrong with him?" "Well, he's sick." And then the next day they went out, they saw an old person. "What's he bent over like?" "Well he's old! I mean what's the matter with you? You're going to be old too." Then they saw, carrying a person to a funeral parlor. "What's in there?" "That's a corpse." Then they saw a Monk. "What's he doing?" "Well he's trying to figure out a way to get out of all this mess." Ah, that sounds interesting. And he went back. And then he, next day, or whatever how many days afterwards he left. He just left his wife and kid. He just had a kid too. And he went out for six

years and tried all the different religions and all the different teachers. And he tried severe [assetersisms?] and extreme sensuality, which he had experienced at his home. And he tried sitting on nails, and all the stuff that was happening. All the ah, it was like ninety-six different kinds of Hinduism, Yogic religions around India at that time. And he tried them all. He went to all the teachers of all, all the big teachers he'd go right by the teachers and the teachers would become his student. And then he just couldn't go anymore, and he was very disappointed. And he sat down under this [bowdy?] tree and he said, "I ain't moving until I figure this out." Then he, it just came to him. He just figured it all out. It was totally experiential. The thing is that when he first figured out the four noble truths he was afraid to tell people about it, because they said, "this was so far fetched that people will not want to understand this. They'll just think I'm out of my tree." And he was just going to die.

B: Which are the four truths?

M: Huh?

B: Which are the four truths?

M: Suffering.

B: Oh, okay.

M: The rising of suffering.

B: Right.

M: Cessation and the way, path. He said, "people are going to think I'm crazy, but this celestial being came down and says, Hey, yo Buddha! What's up man?" "Ah, big happenings down here, saw all kind of lights over here yesterday, huh?" "Yeah, I became enlightened, man! Four noble truths." And this particular Brumah said, "there's, you know, there's not, there's few people in the world that don't have much dust in their eyes. You can just go right go right out and clean them out. Just very easy. Just say a few words to him." Nah, this is a very hard thing to, for people to understand, but he talked them into it. And the first people he went to teach were his old teachers, but they all passed away already. And then he thought about these five guys he used to hang out with. They were all yogies together in the beginning of the six year period, then he went off. And ah, those are the first five Monks. The first five people.

B: Did he go back and convert his family?

M: Yeah, he, actually his mother passed away. And he went, spiritually traveled to the heavens and taught his mother how to become a [name unclear], a fully enlightened being. And his son became the first novice. And his cousin became a Monk, his other cousin became a Monk. His ah, stepmother was the first Buddhist nun. His mother had passed away. I think it was seven days after, or ten days after he was born. And his stepmother [says name in Buddha], she nursed him. And then she became the first Buddhist nun I believe. He was just a regular guy, you know. And he had the regular problems, you know.

B: Now, are these ah, are these stories told and retold?

M: Yeah.

B: In the, you know, in temple and (M: Yeah) the Monks tell the people (--)

M: Yeah, sometimes. Sometimes they don't.

B: The people read it or what?

M: I read most of the stuff myself. I've heard these stories from my teachers. But I have, see my situation with the Monks is different. I have a very intimate relationship with most of the ones I know. Most of these people are very stand offish from Monks. They consider Monks to be other worldly and beyond their realm, you know. To me I don't feel like that. They're all just the same as me. They come from the same place.

B: You know that the people here feel that way too?

M: Well!

B: They seem to interact, but I don't know. Of course I don't understand what they're saying. I don't know.

M: They interact, but it stops at a certain, it stops at a certain point, then it stops. (B: Yeah) You know what I mean?

B: But what about when they come for ah, you know, assistance? Help with a problem? Instruction, anything like that?

M: That all depends on what the problem is? They might use any (--) Sao Khon knows so many stories he might use any example. You never know.

B: But he uses stories?

M: Yeah, stories from the Buddhist (name unclear) birth stories and, (sweeping noise in background) (--)

B: Just cleaning up?

M: Yeah, she does this all the time. She'll sweep this whole floor with a little dust broom this afternoon probably.

B: And she lives here?

M: Yeah.

B: Where? Where's her room?

M: In that back room.

B: With all that stuff?

M: Storage room, yeah. She doesn't want to go home. She should really go home. By rights, Buddhist Law she shouldn't be living in a temple with Monks, but you know, what can you do?

B: Why, because she's a woman, or ?

M: Because she's a woman, yeah.

B: She doesn't want to go home.

M: No, she don't want to go home. She wants to die here.

B: How long has she been here?

M: Since I've been here, five months.

B: No, I mean in this country.

M: I think about two years, three years. She's a good teacher for me. She reminds me of old age all the time. (Laughs) She does.

B: Yeah, she looks like the classic example.

M: She's a classic old age example.

B: Bent over and (--) [long pause] So people can just walk up to the alter and (--)

M: Do whatever they want.

B: Touch things, put things up there.

M: Yeah, [laughs] it's really, it's really free. It's easy. You know, it's a public place. They, they bought it. It's their place. We just kind of live here, and if they have a problem, we try to help them, you know, like? It's like we're their soldiers. You know, it's like our soldiers. We realize when there's trouble, we have our soldiers to protect us. They have trouble, they have their Monks to protect them, you know. Come and see the Monk. See what to do about the problems.

B: They come here for every problem (M: Everything) imaginable?

M: From marriage problems, to insurance problems, to health problems, to gynecological

problems, to you name it. The Monk is the authority in Asia, because most of the people are busy working all the time. The agriculture, have to work a lot of hours. The Monks, they practice all the time, so they know more.

B: So, for a lot of people it's still the first place they come when they have a problem?

M: Yeah.

B: And they might get referred somewhere else?

M: From here? We never refer anybody to anywhere else.

B: You don't want to say, well you should go see a medical doctor, or (--)

M: Oh yeah! If something like, obvious like that. If somebody comes in with (--)

B: You should see an attorney if your having a problem with your (--)

M: Yeah. Sometimes like if it's two Cambodians that have a car accident together, they'll come here and they'll figure it out here.

B: Hm. What's (--) That sounds like pretty basic ah, approach. Probably the way it was with all religions. You went to the, the person with wisdom when you had a problem.

M: Either go to the village elder, or you go to the priest or the monk. Europe it's the same way.

B: I wonder how much of an introduction to American culture modern Cambodia has been [unclear] to the people. I mean things have changed over there too. So some of those changes are what they see here too. Especially the people from the city.

[LONG PAUSE ON TAPE]

M: [Unclear] will be in bed by six o'clock tonight.

B: Oh yeah?

M: [Laughs] Cutting the wood. What time is it?

B: Quarter to three.

M: It's early.

B: The sun's gone.

M: Yeah.

B: It feels later.

M: Yeah, it does, doesn't it? I'll be all alone now. There's no Monk down stairs to keep me company.

B: No Sao Khon?

M: No, Sao Khon and I hardly ever see each other during the day.

B: Really?

M: Yeah.

B: What does he do?

M: He's busy. He's writing, or doing some study, or practicing meditation. He's a very good Monk. Really, he's a good example of a Buddhist Monk. He's good with the people, and he's good with himself.

B: When he writes, what does he write?

M: He write philosophy and logic, and he might write an article for some Buddhist magazine. Or, you know he's always just doing little research projects, like I, I do that too. It's like a fun little thing to do when your a Monk. You have these little research projects and you get into it, you know. It's like your own thing.

B: Now is there a library here?

M: No.

B: If he wants to do research how does he do it?

M: He has his own books. Most Monks have a few books of their own that they like to study and they, you know (--) Like he got a house of ah, you know astrology table, tells when the sun comes up and goes down every day? He got one of those yesterday in Thai. He's a very good astrologist, so he's probably downstairs reading that or something.

B: Now how does, how does Oriental astrology relate to European?

M: It's much different. It's totally different.

B: Really? I know the signs are different.

M: Yeah, it's much different.

B: But is the theory the same?

M: I'm not in, I'm not, I'm not sure. I'm not qualified to answer that. They spray perfume in here too. [swish, swish] Smell it.

B: Yup.

M: Smell it?

B: Umhm. Unless the candles are scented. [whispers: maybe the candles are scented]

M: No, they put perfume, they spray it in there. They do that, just spray it all over. Let's go downstairs Mike.

B: Yeah, there's a draft in here.

END OF TAPE

LFP-MB-R016

[M & B are reviewing slides, Massey will describe them]

M: Just put, just blast through it, blast through the whole thing once. [You can hear the machine click as each slide is viewed. Most of the conversation is unclear.]

B: [Cannot hear him]

M: Well most people are busy.

B: [Cannot hear him]

M: Yeah, the Monk part of it. Just keep going. I'll tell you what I know.

B: [Cannot hear question]

M: No, the wedding. (B: Unclear) All these I can describe for you.

B: Oh, thank you. You know what that's all about?

M: Umhm. There he is "Bad Boy Noy" [Laughs].

B: That's [unclear]. He's the one that was ah...

M: Yeah.

B: Comes here on Friday?

M: Yeah, the one with the glasses. He was...

B: A former Monk?

M: He was a Monk for about twenty-seven years.

B: Family?

M: Yeah, family, musicians.

B: The strobe on the ah, flash wasn't working. So that [rest of comment unclear] (M: Hm) I has trouble translating some of the names of things too. Now here's the sword.

M: I don't know what that's all about. I've never seen that part of a wedding.

B: Then they go into her room?

M: And [laughs] she's, give me a break. [Laughs]

B: It's quite a ceremony.

M: Yeah I know. I say, she'd be in big trouble if she was doing that with me. [laughs]

B: In this part, she's singing or telling a story. And he's acting it out. He presents a little [unclear]. And the family.

M: Umhm.

B: [Unclear]. That's it.

M: Okay, put down the one in there. Lets see what happens [unclear]. That's not in the Temple. That's at somebody's house.

B: You sure?

M: Yeah.

B: Because I said that didn't look like a Temple. And they said, well it was around the corner there, or something.

M: No.

B: That little alcove.

M: No.

B: That's at someone's house, all right.

M: Yeah.

B: That too?

M: Yeah, I can't, I can't see anything in there that resembles this place.

B: It looks like the house where the wedding was.

M: Yeah, I think that's what it is.

B: That table, they, I recognize that table. All right. That too? No, this is a Temple.

M: That's ah, that's at somebody's house I believe. Cause there's that same table.

B: Yeah, keep going.

M: All right. That's at somebody's house.

B: I wonder what it was?

M: Hey!

B: What are you doing up there? Oh, you took this out. [Laughs] No wonder. Okay. You got to put them in upside down.

M: Going down to Burger King. Hey!

B: Want a copy of that?

M: Yeah, that's a funny picture. All of these, all of these are funny. Give me, give me negatives of all these, they're funny.

B: There's the two Monks that ah...

M: They're from Lynn. This one disrobed, and that one is still a Monk.

B: Oh, all right. And this is just an ordinary day? Is this a...

M: No, that was the ceremony we had for ah, mm, Kateme. I think that was after the ah,

[reigns?] retreat. This is recording now?

B: Yeah.

M: Oh, it is.

B: Well kind of. I don't know how good the levels are.

M: That's the head Monk of all of us. That's [says name, cannot transcribe] the big Monk. Then Sao Khon.

B: The one on the left?

M: Yeah. Then Sao Khon.

B: Where does he live?

M: Lynn. [Repeats his name], he lives in Lynn, near Boston. He's the Monk that ordained me. That's um, that's [identifies another Monk. Cannot transcribe name]. He lives here, and he's in Thailand now. He went to Thailand for a month.

B: The one on the right?

M: Yeah.

B: Yeah, I recognize him.

M: That's Sao Khon.

B: Who's in the back? Looks like a waiter.

M: That's, no, no, that man he has white shirt and black pants. So it means he used to be a Monk before. That's what they call ajah.

B: Ajah ?

M: Ajah.

B: Any former Monk?

M: Yeah.

B: Okay. Here's the ceremony. That looks...

M: And you can see [Massey is referring to the head Monk, name unclear] is up in the big chair. That means he is going to give a discourse.

B: Oh yeah.

M: You know like that big chair they have over there?

B: Right. I recognize some of these people. What ceremony was this?

M: Ah, I think it was getting the robes. [Kateme, other words unclear] give you the robes after the (B: [reigns?] retreat). What she's doing is she's pouring water. Transference of merit. They chant a certain [Massey begins to chant]. That's what she's doing. She's pouring the water and transferring the merit. Now she's going to pour it outside for everybody.

B: Sometimes they sprinkle it on people.

M: Yeah.

B: For good fortune, blessing.

M: Yeah, blessing.

B: Ah, where's this?

M: That's out in my cooty.

B: Oh, all right. Who was out there?

M: That's my friend Chin. He's from the Chinese Temple. That's me up in the corner. Ah, and those are just Cambodian people that came out to see me, that's all. And that's ah, me, and that's ah, I'd like a copy of this by the way. That's Chanty, and that's Wilawan, she's from Thailand. She's one of my life supporters. And this woman here, she's married to George Chigas. He used to work for the Cambodian, Cambodian M.A.A.

B: His was one of the first mixed marriages in Lowell, wasn't it? I saw that in the book, photo book. Nice photos. Who's on the right?

M: That's ah, she's from Thailand. She, her name is Wilawan.

B: Wilawan?

M: Yeah, she's ah, she supports ah, Laos Monks, Thai Monks.

B: Does she live in Lowell?

M: No, she lives in Cambridge. She's a student at Harvard University, but she also works in the Lowell School System as a translator.

B: Another one. I think the first one's better.

M: Yeah, that's a nice one.

B: This is outside?

M: Yeah. That was an information booth they put out, up outside, because of lack of space. We had like three thousand people that day.

B: Information for?

M: Yeah, instead of coming in and putting incense in front of that Buddha, they put a Buddha outside. You put incense in front of that, because there are so many people, you know?

B: Is this from the local community?

M: Yeah, Providence. [Says the following names in Asian:] Providence, Lawrence, Amherst, Lowell.

B: This wasn't at the opening of the Temple though.

M: No, no, no, no. This was just recently.

B: Well, I think that's it for the Temple. Yup. Too much back biting.

M: It's a nice shot though. Got the pigeons in there, and Mrs. Chigas. Hollywood.

B: That's it. There aren't any negatives. You know these are, these are the negatives.

M: Yeah.

B: I can give you print, ah, you know prints, (M: yeah, make, make them) regular prints. Go back to the wedding?

M: Yeah. That's basically just a formal picture of the wedding. That's all that is. Husband and wife, stepmother, and I don't know who the other lady is.

B: Ah, that's the bride's mother.

M: Oh, it is?

B: On the right. Yeah.

M: Man, that guy was busy. He had her for a wife, her for a wife, [rest of comment unclear]

B: Wait a minute. Mrs. Chu, right?

M: Yeah, Chuen.

B: Chuen? (M: Yeah) She's the stepmother of (--)

M: Stepmother of that girl.

B: Of the girl?

M: Yeah. Yeah, this fellow is Vietnamese, Cambodian. And that must be her mother.

B: Okay. Okay. That's the grandmother of the bride, with the shaved head, right?

M: No. She's not as old as that other woman. That woman's only in her sixties.

B: She couldn't be a grandmother of a sixty year old woman. Their kinship terms must not coincide.

M: Yeah. Okay. Listen, this man had five wives, okay.

B: Umhm.

M: Chuen, she's the latest one.

B: Right.

M: This one here, was before.

B: Right.

M: The other one in white that was sitting there was before. And then there was two others that died. So what you have is many different children with the same father and different mothers.

B: Right. Now well who's this woman? I thought she was (--)

M: She was (--)

B: Wong said she was the grandmother.

M: They call her grandma because she's Yeah. Yeah means grandmother. They call her that because she has a shaven head and she's celibate probably.

B: Oh, is she really, she might not be related to the family?

M: Not blood wise. She's related to them, because she was married to one.

B: Oh. Oh, she was one of the wives too?

M: Yeah.

B: Okay. The one sitting down?

M: Yeah, the one in the blue, with the shaven head and the the big [unclear]. (B: Oh) I think that's (--)

B: So you got the bride's mother on the right. And then on the lower right was the former wife of her father. And probably on the other side is his family.

M: Yeah.

B: And he's Vietnamese?

M: I believe he's Vietnamese-Cambodian. He works in a bank. That's where she met him. These are just relatives, or friends. That's her brother right there.

B: Right, Wong Penh. I talked with him. And I think the other person is a friend of the groom.

M: Yeah. This is um, this is us when we first got there. Having refreshments and water before we have to chant. And this is um, the lay people chant preliminary passages before the ceremony starts to Buddha. Okay, all chant together. And then they request the precepts from the Head Monk, which is Sao Khon. The five layman's precepts. And after the precepts they request us to bless the wedding. Okay.

B: So what does that mean?

M: So right now they're doing like their preliminary group prayer type. What you would call a group prayer in Christian terms. Okay. They're doing group chanting to get everybody together and make this auspicious thing happen.

B: Do they know what to chant?

M: Yeah. That's what the one in the front does, Pen Noy.

B: Pen Noy.

M: Yeah, he's like a, he's like a village priest. That's his title now.

B: What?

M: Like a village priest. He knows how to do all the Buddhist ceremonies and stuff like that. He knows all the customs.

B: He gets paid for performing this little (--)

M: Yeah. People give him donations. They give him cigarettes, incenses, candles, money.

B: So how long does his part take?

M: Ah, that takes about ten or fifteen minutes.

B: Yeah. Did you stay for the entire ceremony?

M: No, just the part I have to do.

B: Yeah.

M: And this is just another photograph of them still doing the same thing. [Massey begins to chant.]

B: Wait a minute.

M: Yeah, this is just, this is an old nun, in the middle.

B: Yeah.

M: She follows the eight precepts. That's why she wears white, and shaves her head.

B: But she can't, she can't really be a Monk.

M: No.

B: She can do everything, and she can shave her head and follow the rules.

M: Yeah, that's all.

B: She has to wear white. She can't wear saffron.

M: Uh uh.

B: And she can't really be called a Monk.

M: No. That lineage died out.

B: So what do they, what do they call her?

M: Yeah, grandmother.

B: Oh. But they're not really nuns, you know? Are they mostly women who don't have

husbands now?

M: Mostly women who get old do this. But in Asia before, lots of women did this. They were very strong. In Thailand there's a lot of what they call a [unclear]. Eight precept woman, with shaven head and no family.

B: That's a nice shot.

M: This is Sao Khon and I chanting ah, ["unclear"] on discourses on blessings that ah, that Buddha always said to the lay people, you know, when they had a function where he was invited. Invited.

B: This is at the end of the group chant?

M: Yeah, yeah. This is what they invite us to chant, this blessing for everybody, and sprinkle holy water and all that stuff on them.

B: Okay. Oh the same thing.

M: Yeah, it's a wide angled view of the same thing. Same.

B: He's also got black and white through this too.

M: Has he?

B: Yeah.

M: Same. They're just listening to us chant.

B: So this is all part of this blessing.

M: Same. Same. Ah, this point here I believe Sao Khon might be giving them some advice.

B: In Cambodian?

M: Yeah. The same with this part. He's still talking to them.

B: Now would this be like traditional advice, or would this be personal?

M: No, this might just, this might just be according to the context. He might know her a little bit, or he might know him a little bit. He might know some of their character traits.

B: Okay. So it's quite personal.

M: Yeah, it's very personal. (B: Not just a formal) No, it's not just a thing where, "dearly beloved we are gathered here". No, we don't have that.

B: Okay, that's (--) Now that's the brother of the bride and his wife.

M: Yeah, I can't, I can't explain this to you, because I don't know about this.

B: Well, from what I can piece together, he's like the representative. The oldest married male in the family.

M: Umhm.

B: So he's like the representative of what married life should be. So he's got to sit there. They kind of go through the ceremony too. And the guy I talked to yesterday called that thing a palm fruit.

M: Yeah, it is.

B: Is that what it is?

M: Yeah.

B: It's the fruit of the palm?

M: Yeah.

B: And there's two candles. One you know, representing the couple. And I think they cut that palm fruit.

M: They take it apart. I'm not exactly sure what they do with it though.

B: I think they wrap it up. These are just, I think these are [unclear] musicians.

M: Yeah.

B: Then they have two candles in the, that's not water though?

M: No? (B: Is this?) It should be.

B: In front?

M: Yeah.

B: It looks like separate containers of stuff.

M: No.

B: I don't know. So you don't know what this part is?

M: No.

B: And then the fruit. See they have to go through it too, he said.

M: Yeah.

B: So I guess their going to share the fruit like the way the bride and groom do later.

M: Umhm. (B: Now) He's just setting up the offerings before the ceremony that's all. There's a certain way that, those are chew, those are tobacco kits.

B: Oh, is that what that is?

M: Yeah, that's chewing (--)

B: See he, he didn't know what to call it in English. But he said they're old. They've been in the families.

M: Yeah, chewing tobacco, and beetle nut, and stuff.

B: Like the grandparents, one from each family.

M: Yeah, tobacco, beetle nut, tobacco leaves.

B: Coe leaves.

M: Yeah, that's what they keep the kit. That's smoke tobacco kit...

B: Lime paste, you know that's all for sale at the Southeast Asian Market.

M: Yeah, I know.

B: It's a narcotic.

M: [laugh]

B: No one around here is hip to that.

M: No.

B: So that's what that is.

M: I have a friend that does [humonic?] studies. He wants to try that stuff some time.

B: Well it's a stimulant, right?

M: I guess so. I don't.

B: Beetle nut.

M: It's suppose to be a narcotic.

B: Okay. This I don't know.

M: I don't understand this part. Maybe after Sao Khon finished with those people he can explain this to us. What time is it getting to be?

B: About ten o'clock.

M: Okay.

B: What times chow?

M: Eleven-thirty. I just got to make some stuff.

B: Okay, that's the water with the two candles.

M: Yeah, that's for us to do.

B: You do that.

M: We burn those candles during a certain part of the chanting. Sao Khon will take one of the candles out and hold it so it drips in the water. So that the fire and the water mix together. And then he sprays that water on the people with a little whisk.

B: Okay. Now this must be after the blessing, before the wedding ceremony. These are in order that they were shot.

M: Yeah.

B: So the wedding is not over yet.

M: No, it's long. This is good information. I'll never be married in Cambodian. The wedding takes too long. It takes two days I think doesn't it?

B: I don't know. I'd never get married the way I did either.

M: What's that? Go to church?

B: Three hundred people, you know.

M: Forget it.

B: Two people from my family. Two hundred and ninety eight from hers.

M: Is your wife Jewish. [Laughs] Did you ever see a Jewish girl eat a banana? [Long pause on tape, then Massey laughs.]

B: That's a visual joke. (? : very) (M: [unclear]. Sometime they'll be playing...) Okay, musicians. They're playing before the ceremony begins? (M: Yeah) It's like a break?

M: Yeah, they're usually playing when we come in. When we come in they dr...(--)

?: They ripple and you turn into a cripple.

B: [Laughs]

M: Except they drink Seagrams.

B: They look like Pepsi right now.

M: Yeah, they've got Pepsi and Seagrams right there. (B: Oh They've always got either Remy, Grand Marnier or Seagrams. They go for the heavy duty stuff.

B: I guess. Yeah, they're from Providence. Another posed picture. Now it looks like he, they've changed clothes.

M: Yeah.

B: They just rent those cloths.

M: I think so. They have a, I think they have a marriage rental service. Cambodian in town they have all different size uniforms.

B: That guy is playing the Tube.

M: That guy's a very good violin player. I know him.

B: The one on the right playing the tube.

M: Yeah, whatever it is. I call it the violin.

B: I've got photographs and tapes [unclear]. Ah, now this is the beginning of the ceremony.

M: This is phallic symbolism.

B: The sword. .

M: I think so.

B: The sword and the sheath. The guy was trying to explain that it was like one and two.

M: Yeah.

B: Two and one.

M: Yeah, one and one is two. And when one and one get together that makes three.

B: He said it was from the days of royalty. The kings, I don't know, he was trying to relate it to the kings. I couldn't understand the relationship. Now see those three things down front that are wrapped this way.

M: Yeah, those are the palm fruit.

B: Yeah, they've already cut them.

M: Yeah, I don't know what the significance of that is.

B: And they wrap them with leaves.

M: I don't know what the significance of that is at all Mike.

B: With the flowers. And one was suppose to be for her family, one for his I think, and one for the couple. Same with the flowers on each side. See, she's unwrapping them. Now why is she doing that?

M: I don't know.

B: And they're wrapped with leaves?

M: Yeah, every wedding I've been to has been slightly different.

B: So that's the fruit? It's all ah (--)

M: Stringy like, with little pods on it, like seeds.

B: These people should come over and tell us.

M: Yeah. They're looking at him through the thing there.

B: I wonder what he's doing above the groom's head? I guess this is part of the ceremony to ah (--)

M: At this part of the ceremony I never, never been to, I'd never done before.

B: He's comparing the sword and the sheath to the couple, and how they should two, but one. That's what Sargeant told me yesterday The guy's name is Sargeant. So. [reviewing slides] And the food? See, they've changed, or they put a robe on anyway.

M: Yeah.

B: And they're going to take her into her bedroom. Yeah, look! But everybody goes in there with them to watch them share the banana. Your right, that's pretty symbolic.

M: Yeah, like I said, if I were in that room she wouldn't be sitting there like that. Excuse me. You know? [Both laugh] You back stabber, you! [laughs]

B: [Unclear] pictures.

M: Where's the good stuff?

B: She does look a little nervous.

M: A little?

B: Like don't leave me alone in here guys.

M: Yeah, yeah, you should have seen her three or four days before she got married. She came to see me to talk about everything like that.

B: How old is she?

M: Twenty-three, twenty-four.

B: Oh! Now this part, no one could really give me a very good explanation.

M: Uh, I don't know about that.

B: Apparently she's singing and talking to the [story?]

M: He's probably acting out of (--)

B: And he's acting it out.

M: Yeah, a marriage story probably.

B: Yeah, that's how they have to help each other. So apparently he's sick. In a one spot you'll see the woman come over, see! And then they reverse the roll. See? Takes care of her.

M: This is basically the way we sum it up when we get married, through sickness and through health. They just like to lay on the floor and say it. [laughs]

B: Act it out. I noticed a couple sitting in the chair. That's probably not, is that traditional?

M: I don't know.

B: And then ah, the village Monk gave him the rug. Wong said inside would be some, he said filo. He said filo. You know like Greek pastry?

M: Yeah.

B: There's a pretty big Greek influence in Lowell. I think he probably thinks filo is just what everybody calls pastry. (M: Yeah, everybody) More poses.

M: Family pictures.

B: Yeah. Too dark. His family. Both together. But that's where those other shots are that begin in the Temple, right?

M: Yes.

B: I think somebody made a mistake.

B: That's probably in the house, isn't it?

M: That's it. That is the house.

B: Yeah, they've just been filed wrong. Is this in the house too? Or is this in the temple.

M: That's in the house.

B: Oh God! How many of these?

M: That's in the house. [Yawns] What time is it Mike?

B: It's 10:10. (M: Okay) See the temple?

M: Now let's see what's going on in the kitchen. What the hell, have a restaurant.

End of tape